

## GAIF Award 2014: Martin Parnham

Martin received a GAIF award last year to enable him to carry out visits to schools in Dominica in the Lesser Antilles. As Martin wrote in his report for our group:

‘The aim of this visit was to assess the perception of natural hazards in a less developed state. To do this, at each place visited the local hazards were assessed in the field, and students were interviewed with a new method to assess their understanding of natural hazards.’

One of the schools visited was Portsmouth Secondary School:

‘The aim the visit to the school was to conduct interviews with students and observe and evaluate teaching methods to help construct a more meaningful curriculum for teaching natural hazards (using student perceptions as a basis for their gaps in knowledge). First and second form students were interviewed to determine their understanding of local natural hazards, how they learn about hazards and how they would respond to the threat of a given hazard. Many students perceived hurricanes as the biggest threat; no surprise considering they face this threat each year. Volcanoes



Martin at the Kalinago Carib Village

were also perceived as a major threat; however, many students did not feel this threat was immediate. In fact some were unaware of the threat of the nearby Morne aux Diaboles volcano.

Interestingly the threat of earthquakes and tsunami were not perceived as high, despite the fact that there have been recent tremors to the north of Portsmouth and that the shoreline part of the settlement is built on past tsunami deposits.

Many of the students saw their parents as their main source of information for their understanding of natural hazards, with TV and radio considered important. Few perceived the work of the Office of Disaster Management or the Red Cross as important and few had come into contact with any work done by them.’

Martin is keen for his work to benefit geographers in the UK and is creating a DME and accompanying set of resources based on his visit and the threat of different hazards on the island. He will also lead a workshop at Conference, the title being ‘Improving hazard perception through education’.

ISIG is considering a Study Tour to Dominica and Grenada in the summer of 2017 so keep in touch if interested. Contact Kevin Cook at [cook.k3@sky.com](mailto:cook.k3@sky.com). Martin has kindly offered to help with arrangements and we have past GAIF recipients from Grenada who have attended conference as our guests and with who we are still in contact.

## GAIIF Award 2013: Pavana Praveen

This is a report on the Geographical Association conference I attended as a delegate, between 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2012 in Manchester. This report gives a summary of my experiences at the conference and how today, these experiences have shaped me as a more effective Geography teacher.

The gamut of events organized by the Conference kept me alive and totally engrossed for two complete days. What gladdened me the most was the freedom I was given as a participant to choose, what program I desired to attend. Thus I chose to attend the events with topics that were of interest to me. As there were a range of choices in terms of formats of presentation, like lectures, workshops, teacher-to-teacher sessions, award functions, these also kept me totally engaged. I was very involved and it was so much fun, I would not have minded if the conference had extended a few more days.

The conference exposed me to a whole range of new ideas and innovative practices in the teaching and learning of Geography. My interactions with people- students, teachers, academicians, publishers, curriculum makers, all related to Geography, helped me to know what was happening in Geography teaching in other countries. New ideas and new techniques in the teaching and learning have added to my present understanding of Geography. I strongly feel these ideas and this exposure will help me go a long way as a Geography teacher.

When I left for the Conference I had initial worries about how I will be accepted and how my ideas will be received. But once there, the conference dispelled all these worries. As a teacher, Participating in the conference, has been a very enriching experience. It helped me come in contact with people from various walks of life, from a variety of cultures, who were like minded and shared a common passion- Geography. Personally, I would say, coming to the conference has invigorated me. It gave me the opportunity to make new friends, experience a different culture, and explore various ideas brought together by participants from across the globe under one forum- The Geographical Association.

### **Pavana Praveen 15 June 15 2012**



## GAIIF Award 2013: Isabella Prentice



What a pleasure it was to be a delegate at the GA Annual conference in Manchester, United Kingdom! At the 2012 Conference there were over 700 delegates attending from 32 countries.

How did I get there?!!!! It all began with an advertisement seen in the 2010 Summer issue of the *GA Teaching Geography*. Upon seeing it, the idea took root to apply for grant funding to attend.

Immediately, an online application was filled responding to all questions and sought funding. All fingers were crossed, hoping that the application would receive a favourable response. Guess what? An email was received stating that the deadline had long passed!!!! However, it was not all bad as the mail indicated that the application would be forwarded for review for the 2012 year and VOILA! The application was successful and grant funding had been approved to attend GA Conference 2012.

The Conference had a packed and very interesting schedule. Prior to the actual conference dates, there were several activities, one was a Manchester Canal Tour. What was this? WOW!!!, a 4½ hour boat ride on Manchester's canal. The historical background, uses, changes and present day trend of and along the canal was discussed. The tour was led by Professor Michael Bradford. For any one doing a course in Human Geography, this is an ideal field study in Urban Renewal.

A sumptuous 3 course meal was served on the boat. Additionally, there was a 1 hr stop over at the newly built Media City. Media City is the new location of BBC and ITV – a switch of its some 1600 jobs out of London. This area has undergone massive renewal. The delegates were given a historical background and present day trend of the area by a representative of the Peel Consortium.

The actual conference was held at the University of Manchester on Sackville Street in the Renold Building. There were sessions covering all topics that gave a spin to the Conference's theme of Differences.

There was a Land Use field trip within Manchester looking at Use through several different lenses. Three specific areas were chosen (a) Canal Street (b) China Town (c) Picadilly Gardens. Delegates who signed up spent about 3 hours going through the area and doing the field study not in the using format of a prepared questionnaire, but rather to be immersed in the environment as an active observer.

The Conference's greatest strengths were

- the networking among geography practitioners
- the display by publishers/companies of up-to-date texts, technology, websites
- the wealth of information given in a short space of time
- the efficient GA personnel – GAIIF personnel, Conference Coordinator
- the hands on workshops

Sincerest thanks to the GAIIF for making this possible. Also thanks to Kevin Cook, Laura, Catherine and the ever bubbly Lucy Oxley. Folks you made my experience worth it. To all whom I interacted with in one way or another thanks for sharing.



## GAIIF Award 2012: Peter Ouma Lusi

During one week that I spent at the King Alfred School in Somerset, I learnt a lot on the modern teaching methods, especially use of Google earth, Power point and Video footage in teaching Geography. I acquired video clips on the Physical Geography, samples of some gemstones and some textbooks that would help our students in learning the topics of 'Rock and Minerals' and 'Internal and External land forming processes' in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Syllabus. I also toured the Cheddar gorge, where I enjoyed watching the beautiful landscapes and also made a short movie on the formation of the underground drainage features, such as stalactites, stalagmites, pillars and cave. The movie will be used in teaching 'the Underground Drainage and Karst Scenery' topic.

I learnt so many things from the numerous workshops and lectures that I attended at the GA Conference, some of them include the following:

An exciting lecture on teaching Physical Geography in four diagrams, which explored ways of using statistical methods to encourage students to think and get deeper insight of complex issues in Physical Geography.

I also attended a lecture on '40 ideas in 40 minutes', which made me aware of many free teaching resources available in the Geography-related websites that we can use to make Geography lessons interesting.

In 'the Advanced Google Earth' workshop, we had an interesting practical session on using Google Earth software to make maps, making a tour on map with multiple places and having a street view for field work. This workshop equipped me with knowledge and skills, which would help me to make the learning of 'Map Work' topics interesting to the students. It would also be useful in teaching the Case studies, Glaciations and Coastal features, because they can tour these places using the Google Earth.

I also learnt how to use the Gapminder Foundation's World Trendlyser resources in the classroom, which would help me in teaching the topics of 'the Population' and 'the Statistical Methods' in the KCSE Form Four Geography syllabus.

The visit also provided us with an opportunity to explore on areas of mutual interest to focus on in our school link. Finally, it also provided a chance to make friends with some members of GA that may help me in my career and professional development. After sharing my experience in UK with my colleagues, the staff felt challenged to make our school more learner friendly and embrace use of technology in teaching and learning. Use of technology has inspired a lot interest among students taking Geography, where we are currently experimenting and we are expecting many students to take Geography next year.

**Peter Ouma Lusi, Kandaria Mixed Secondary School, Kenya.**





## GAIIF award 2010: Stawa Shaibu

*Ms Stawa Shaibu was the recipient of a GAIFF award that allowed her to visit the UK for the 2010 conference.*

' I was invited to attend the Geographical Association Conference which took place at Derby University. The visit was a wonderful time for me and represents one of the memorable times in my life.

On the first day of conference I went on the Peak District National Park field visit that included the Hope Quarries and Cement Works, G E Willmot and Son Hilltop Farm, Thornbridge Brewery, and Bradwell's Ice Cream Factory. It was very interesting for me because the National Park is organised quite differently from the way we run National Parks in Malawi. I was surprised to see that farming, quarrying and other industrial activities are allowed in a National Park. There are even residential areas as well as shopping centres in the Park; quite different from my country where a National Park is completely reserved for wild animals and plants. This, however, helped me to understand land use conflict in UK National Parks and will allow me to teach this topic better to my students. The Peak District National Park is one of the case studies that I use with my students when teaching the topic of tourism in the MEDCs.

Friday was another busy day with exhibitions, workshops and lectures taking place at the same time. It was not easy for me to decide which ones to attend because all were interesting and many were relevant to my geography teaching. I attended sessions on transport geography, new approaches to the teaching of geography, migration in the enlarged EU and Google Earth, just to mention a few. The GA had kindly provided me with a bursary of £100 to purchase text books or teaching materials for my school. I cannot say how excited I was to hear this news because I had already seen two DVDs on Coastal Management and UK Population Change (Migration) which are very important case studies in our geography teaching. I would like to thank the GA very much on behalf of my school for this offer.

On the Saturday, after attending more sessions, I gave my presentation on Geography Teaching in Malawi. I enjoyed it very much and I think those who attended enjoyed it too. There were many questions and the audience showed a lot of interest about the teaching of geography in Malawi.

At the end of conference we left for the North of England and went to the countryside. Adam Nichols has a cottage in the village of West Burton in the Yorkshire Dales and we stayed there as his guests. Staying here I learnt a lot about changes in the British countryside as well as some of the history of West Burton and sheep farming. We then went to Durham City, Adam's home and visited the South Shields coast and Sunderland. We then returned to Hampton, London after a brief stop at Taylor Road Primary School in Leicester where I was asked to give a presentation about my school, Kamuzu Academy. It went well and the pupils were very enthusiastic about the school and Malawi.

This is just a brief account of the GA Conference, the places I visited and what I learnt during the trip. Apart from that, people at the GA Conference were so helpful and kind. They made me feel part of the group of "Geography Teachers". I thank the GA for inviting me and sponsoring my trip to the UK for the conference. It has been really valuable and my geography teaching will not be the same when I get back home. The visit has also encouraged me to investigate whether we can open and run our own

**Stawa Shaibu, GAIIF Award Recipient**



## GAIIF Awards 2009: McDonald and Emmanuel

**The GA International Initiatives Fund (GAIIF)** made two major awards in 2009. These were to McDonald Gunde, Head of Geography at the Kamuzu Academy Kasungu, Malawi and Emmanuel Lenge, Senior Geography teacher at Mwanhala Secondary School in Tabora Region, Tanzania.

These two geographers come from two markedly different schools. Mc Donald teaches at what is known internationally as the 'Eton of Africa'. Kamuzu is a selective, co-educational boarding school that was founded in 1975 by the first President of Malawi, Dr Kamuzu Banda. Mwanhala is located near Tabora and is a 14-18 Government funded secondary school. It has strong links with Cranbrook School in Kent.

In their reports to GAIIF, both Mc Donald and Emmanuel thanked members of IWG for their hospitality both at conference and afterwards. Visits to primary and secondary schools were arranged for them and they were able to experience many parts of the UK including London and Liverpool.

McDonald spoke for them both when he wrote *"As for the conference itself, I was greatly honoured to find myself interacting with fellow geographers, many of whom were professional and seasoned Geographers. The lectures and workshops were very rewarding. I acquired new information and skills from the workshops I attended, for example using GIS in class; how to conduct meaningful fieldwork; strengthening environmental consciousness among students and many other important skills. Each day was rewarding and exciting and I made a lot of new friends. I had an opportunity to learn from other teachers as well as share with them what we do in Malawi. I also obtained some teaching resources during the exhibition, though I was unable to carry everything I needed because of weight restrictions.*

Both colleagues have now returned to their schools with ambitious plans for the future. McDonald writes that he is *"planning to link up with geography teachers starting with my local area and later linking up with more teachers to share with them the commendable work that the GA in the UK is doing; how to promote geography teaching in our schools using new skills and techniques. In future, we shall hold our own Geography conference and we shall invite some GA members as facilitators"*. The IWG will be supporting this venture and is hoping financial support can be obtained to facilitate the opening of a GA Branch at Kamuzu. We are keeping in contact and will be welcoming another geographer from Malawi Ms Stawa Shaibu, to our 2010 Derby conference.

Both McDonald and Emmanuel were unstinting in their thanks to the GA and to GAIIF. As Emmanuel noted *"My wonderful thanks should go to the Geographical Association. I believe that my geographical knowledge has grown ever wider but as always nothing I attempted would be possible without a great support from GAIIF"*

**Photo: Emmanuel meets David Lambert**

